



PRESS RELEASE

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For Information Contact Public Affairs
PATRICK J. SCHNEIDER
Telephone: (602) 514-7547
Pager: (602) 356-0207

66 YEAR OLD BUCKEYE RESIDENT AND FORMER PROBATIONARY POLICE OFFICER SENTENCED TO 7 YEARS AFTER HIS ARMED PIPE BOMB EXPLODED UNDER AN OCCUPIED PICK-UP TRUCK IN PHOENIX

PHOENIX, ARIZONA -- The United States Attorney's Office for the District of Arizona announced that on Monday, March 3, 2003, JOHNNIE D. ROPER, D.O.B. June 5, 1936, of Buckeye, Arizona, was sentenced to 7 years in prison and ordered to pay \$2,000 in restitution for the offenses of Malicious Damage of a Vehicle Used in Interstate Commerce in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 844(i); Making of an Unregistered Destructive Device in violation of 26 U.S.C. § 5861(f); Possession of an Unregistered Destructive Device in violation of 26 U.S.C. § 5861(d); and Felon in Possession of Firearms in violation of 18 U.S.C. § 922(g)(1), by United States District Judge Jack D. Shanstrom, Phoenix, Arizona.

Roper previously plead guilty to the charges on December 20, 2002. In the course of his guilty plea, Roper admitted the following facts. On August 23, 2002, Roper maliciously damaged by means of an armed pipe bomb, an occupied 1999, Chevrolet, Silverado pick-up truck, operated by a Phoenix based construction company and leased to the construction company by a credit corporation located in Salt Lake City, Utah. Roper planned to damage the pick-up truck through the placement of the pipe bomb under the vehicle while

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it was parked in a residential drive-way in Phoenix, Arizona. The pipe bomb was made by Roper with metal pipe, an improvised electrical detonation device, monofilament line and explosive materials. The device was wired to detonate when the pick-up truck was backed down the operator's driveway. On that same day, the operator of the truck started to back the truck down the driveway and the pipe bomb went off as designed. The pick-up truck and three other vehicles parked nearby were damaged by shrapnel from the bomb. No one was physically injured but a woman standing near the targeted pick-up truck was knocked down by the force of the bomb.

In an affidavit previously submitted by ATF in support of an arrest warrant for Roper, an ATF special agent advised a Magistrate Judge that Roper had been involved in a relationship with the girlfriend of the operator of the truck prior to the bombing and that he had met her on the Internet. The girlfriend further advised ATF that she believed Roper was upset at the time of the bombing because she wanted to end their relationship.

Additionally, Roper admitted that he was found in possession of the following nine (9) firearms on August 27, 2002: a Rossi, 12 gauge, double barrel, shotgun; a Navy Arms Company, .44 caliber, lever action rifle; a Rossi, .44-40 caliber, rifle; a Marlin, .22 caliber, rifle; a Smith & Wesson, .38 caliber, 5 shot revolver; a Smith & Wesson, .38 caliber, derringer; a Smith & Wesson, .44 caliber, revolver; and a Navy Arms Company, .44 caliber revolver, while having been previously convicted of the felony of Theft, Third Degree, in the District Court of Cass County, Texas, Fifth Judicial District, Case Number 18-252, on March 17, 1986. Roper further admitted that he had committed the 1986 offense while he was a probationary police officer with a local police department in Texas. The previous crime involved Roper's attempted fencing of firearms he had recovered during a burglary investigation.

A conviction for Malicious Damage to a Vehicle Used in Interstate Commerce, in violation of 18

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U.S.C. § 844(i), carries a maximum penalty of 20 years imprisonment, a \$250,000.00 fine or both. A conviction for Use of a Destructive Device in Connection with a Crime of Violence, in violation of 18 U.S.C. §§ 924(c)(1)(A) and (c)(1)(B)(ii), carries a minimum mandatory consecutive penalty of 30 years to life imprisonment, a \$250,000.00 fine or both.

The investigation preceding the indictment was conducted by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the Phoenix Police Department. Roper was in federal custody pending sentencing and was remanded to the custody of the Federal Bureau of Prisons.

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